Postal Suites Bear Stamp of Luxury

By Jack Anderson

The Post Office is struggling so desperately to save money that it has cut back services and is planning to increase first-class postage to 10 cents. But the postal poobahs are sparing no expense to build splendiferous new offices for themselves.

They are moving their headquarters from an old Gothic building to the antiseptic environment of Washington's new L'Enfant Plaza. Postmaster General Ted Klassen's private office has already been installed, replete with a $5,280 pantry, $4,602 hand-woven African drapes that can be pulled by remote control and nearly $6,000 worth of other furnishings.

But Klassen's quarters will look positively tacky compared to the penthouse that is planned on the 11th floor. The entire floor will be used for board of governors meetings, and it will take a lot of 10-cent stamps to pay for the fancy fixtures.

The plans call for impressive, hand-carved wooden doors, emblazoned with the seal of the Postal Service, to greet the visitor as he steps off the elevator. It will cost the taxpayers $3,550 just to get past the door.

In the conference room, a gaudy chandelier will hang grandly over the monthly meetings. The cost: $3,718. If the poobahs should get hungry while discussing postal affairs, they won't have to walk down a flight to Klassen's 10th-floor pantry. A kitchen costing $50,000 is planned for the board of governors to use once a month.

The palatial plans also call for glass and marble topped tables, 20 conference chairs at $438.42 each, 52 dining chairs at $212.40 each, four setees at $749.43, six lounge chairs at $480 apiece, eight occasional chairs at $305.90 each and two sofas for $1,147.05. The carpeting will run $8,388.50.

Postal authorities assure us the penthouse area will also be used for press conferences and VIP visitors. Photo developing facilities are also planned for the 11th floor. As evidence of their magnaminity, the postal poobahs made their old furniture available for sale to rank-and-file employees at low prices.

Footnote: Klassen has also been criticized for exorbitant spending on official trips. His entourage paid $560 per night, for instance, for the "Presidential Corridor" at the San Francisco Hilton last April during a regional postal conference. A spokesman said that calling the hotel cost exorbitant was "a gross distortion."